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IN MEMORIAM—LEWIS J. DAVIS.

MINUTE ON THE DEATH OF LEWIS J. DAVIS, PREPARED BY
PRESIDENT HAGNER AND READ TO THE SOCIETY,
DECEMBER 10, 1906.

The Columbia Historical Society desires to spread upon its minutes its recognition of the great loss it has sustained in the death of our valued fellow-member, the late Lewis Johnson Davis. The prominent position he had held for so many years, and the high regard entertained for him in this community, have called forth so many expressions of regret for his loss, and of admiration of his high qualities, that little need be added in this minute except to advert to a few incidents of his busy and valuable life, and to speak of his particular relations to the Society.

A Washingtonian by birth and life-long residence, at an early age he became associated with his grandfather, Lewis Johnson, in the banking-house of Lewis Johnson & Company. Upon the death of Mr. Johnson, Mr. Davis became the principal of the firm. It always maintained a high character for integrity and conservatism, and has come to be one of the oldest establishments of that description in Washington City, and is still in active business under the charge of a former partner of Mr. Davis.

A few years ago Mr. Davis withdrew from the firm, and from active financial business. But it was impossible for him to remain unemployed, and he was always busy; though his chief business occupations from that time were connected with church and charitable work, and with associations like our own.

After the close of the Civil War, it became desirable to change the form of the municipal government in the District of Columbia; and a committee of one hundred persons was selected from the most respectable residents to cooperate with



LEWIS JOHNSON DAVIS.

1834-1906.

the committees of the two Houses of Congress in planning the desired changes. Mr. Davis was chosen as one of the committee of one hundred, and his services were recognized to have been most valuable in the performance of the work assigned.

For a great many years he was a Vestryman and Warden of the Church of the Epiphany and might well have been called one of the "pillars of the church." On the creation of the Diocese of Washington, he was elected one of the committee and the Treasurer of the Episcopal Fund; and he continued to perform the duties of these places faithfully up to the time of his death. The adjustment of the funds between the old and the new diocese, and the arrangement of the investments were matters of considerable difficulty, and his services were very valuable in both capacities.

His aid in charitable matters of various descriptions was always efficient and there were few useful public enterprises during this time in which he was not concerned.

The Columbia Historical Society was incorporated in April, 1894, and Mr. Davis was elected to active membership in December of the same year. In 1897 he was elected one of the Board of Managers, and he has ever since continued to hold that position. Few members of the Society have been more interested in its welfare than he. He has always been placed on important committees, and our comfort and success, in large measure, is due to his intelligent and industrious attention. His hospitality, on repeated occasions to the members of the Society and its visitors has been in keeping with that general feature of his character. No one of our members could be more missed than he will be.

Until about two years ago he appeared as strong and vigorous as any man of his three score and ten years. But then, as unexpectedly as a lightning-bolt falls from the sky, came the startling announcement from his physician that he had been attacked by a serious disorder threatening a fatal and speedy termination. He bore the terrible announcement with his usual calmness, as he afterwards submitted to the sur-

geon's knife with his accustomed fortitude: and few, observing his serenity and the absence of complaint, would have supposed that he was at all aware of the extent of the impending calamity.

For the greater part of his married life he had experienced the pain of witnessing the continued ill-health of his wife, and had ministered to her suffering with unfailing tenderness. But now the conditions were reversed, and the affectionate wife became the faithful nurse of her former attendant. But domestic tenderness and professional skill alike proved vain. He had been trained by his religious life to bear afflictions with the patience of a true Christian, for those who knew him best felt he deserved that encomium. And so, when the time had come for his departure, he knew how to render with resignation,

“His pure soul unto his Captain Christ,
Under whose colors he had fought so long.”